

Parenting Views

"Help Kids Find Oz"

Use this summer to help your children develop their brain, heart and courage.

The *Wizard of Oz* story line reveals many of the key principles which help children develop character traits that will assist them in life. Character building is one of the vital issues in helping kids avoid problems.

Parents often focus on short-term issues, like getting junior to sit still, rather than identifying the character traits that would urge him to do so.

What the *Wizard of Oz* depicts is the development of three key character points needed to live a meaningful life, three ways of acting when faced with a challenge. Those three character points are:

1. To have a *brain*, is to operate with thoughtful intention;
2. To have a *heart*, is to be able to put yourself in the shoes of another and to empathize with their situation; and
3. To have *courage*, is to be courageous enough to stand up for what is right.

Dorothy found herself all alone on a journey with the support of only her dog. Along the way she found the character boost she needed. Imagine if people operated with the full function of heart, mind and courage. We would tell the truth thoughtfully in ways that could improve someone's life.

This summer help kids build character by:

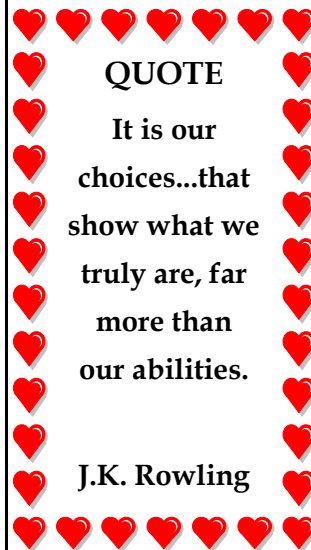
- ♥ Keeping it simple. Choose a maximum of three traits and work on those only (try heart, thought, and courage for starters).
- ♥ Using stories to illustrate character traits. Check out *Aesop's Fables*, or movies such as the *Wizard of Oz*.
- ♥ Character is developed by observing others. Know that 95% of what is learned is through observation. They watch what adults do.
- ♥ Character traits vary from culture to culture. Converse with other adults and friends of your children to make sure everyone is on the same page.
- ♥ Allow your children to observe adults in many situations. Point out people with desired characteristics in books or movies or life. Point it out when your children operate with the desired character traits. Examples: "I saw you take a moment to think before you spoke," or "I noticed you asking your friend about what it was like to lose the ball game," or "It took a lot of courage to speak up about not hurting other feelings by calling them names."



And in the end what did Dorothy learn? "There's no place like home!" Values, virtues, and especially character are developed at home. While we may look to other solutions, summer is the prime time to add to the developing character of your child.



July ~ August 2006



QUOTE

It is our
choices...that
show what we
truly are, far
more than
our abilities.

J.K. Rowling

Fun things to do this summer with your child(ren):

Call your local fire department for a tour of the station and "Open House" dates.

July 6, 13, 20 20 and 27th - Roseville (586) 445-5440 - Walk Michigan and Tunes on Thursdays
Veterans Memorial Park

July 8 - July 29, Thursdays - Macomb Township (586) 992-0710 - Outdoor Concert Series

July 20 - 23 - Fraser (586) 293-3102 - City Picnic and Fireworks

August 3 - 5 - Sterling Heights (586) 446-2489 - Sterlingfest Art and Jazz Festival

August 5 - Mt Clemens (586) 469-6818 - Festival of Lights Boat Parade

August 9 - 13 - St. Clair Shores (586) 445-5200 - Venetian Festival and Fireworks

August 12 - Fraser (586) 293-3102 - Outdoor Movie at Steffens Park

August 15 - 20 - Armada Fair

August 19 - Woodward Dream Cruise www.enjoybirmingham.com (248) 644-1700



"What Can We Do at Home Today?"

In The Sun:

- ☀ Lie on the ground and describe the shapes of the clouds.
- ☀ Take a nature walk. When you get home, ask your child to write or draw all the things you saw or collected. Adults can label the drawings with the children's words. "Collect" these words in a writer's journal.
- ☀ Play the "Silent Walking Game" when you're walking in the park, woods, or neighborhood. Walk quietly for a few minutes or until your child can't stay silent any longer. Then have each family member recall the sounds they heard during the walk. Repeat as long as you are having fun.
- ☀ At the beach or in the garden, draw shapes in the sand or soil. Can your child match the shape? Try making them "giant-sized" by walking the shapes or letters. Pretend you are writing messages to airplanes that might pass by.

Other Fun Stuff to Do at Home - Inside

Sponge Balls

With wet, squishy toys made from kitchen sponges, cooling off on a hot summer day can be as easy as playing a game of catch.

To make one sponge ball, you need three new sponges the same size (4 1/4 x 2 3/4 x 1/2 inch sponges work well).

With a pen and a ruler, make five lines lengthwise on a sponge about 1/2 inches apart. With scissors, cut the sponge into six strips. Repeat with other two sponges.

Lay strips on top of each other in three layers, six strips to a layer.

Cinch them across the middle with a piece of string, knot it tightly. Fluff pieces out into a ball. Then soak in water and let the games begin!

Paint the House

With a large paint brush and a bucket of water—you can paint anything! Kids can have fun "painting" the house, the driveway, their bike, just about anything!

When the water dries, paint it again!

Backyard Obstacle Course

Set up an obstacle course around the edge of your yard letting the kids use their imaginations. Create things to crawl under or through (i.e. the picnic table or a box), climb on things to jump off, run around obstacles.

Even make an obstacle course around the neighborhood—parking blocks form balance beams. When you come to a hill—run, jump, and/or roll up and down it. On cold or rainy days, you can even make one in the house!

Check our website:

www.macombcountymi.gov/msuextension

- ☉ Calendar of upcoming programs
- ☉ Program descriptions
- ☉ Volunteer opportunities
- ☉ The past years Parenting Views

Want to be on our mailing list? Please call! Note: Parenting Views may be reproduced and distributed. If copied please copy intact with logos & resources. Please let us know the number distributed for our tally.

Michigan State University Extension Programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, or family status. MSU, U.S. Dept.



Copy cats permitted!



MSU Extension ~ Family Programs
21885 Dunham Rd. - Suite 12
Clinton Township, MI 48036
Phone: (586) 469-5180